



## Recommendations Based on Consultation with Survivors of Domestic Violence in Hammersmith and Fulham 2005/06

### Introduction

At the May 2006 Steering Committee Nicole Jacobs presented a summary of the findings of the consultation she conducted with Survivors in the winter 05/06. At the end of that presentation she was asked by Chief Supt Valentine to make some recommendations based on the finding of the consultation.

### Consultation Recommendations:

**1. Risk assessments should be systematically done by both the Police and ADVANCE advocates.**

All but one person consulted, had experienced significant risk factors prior to their first contact with the Police. These risks were often not identified or taken seriously in the first contacts with the Police.

**2. Police front office workers should be trained regularly in what they should do if a person seeks help for domestic violence or harassing behaviour.**

The front desk should prioritise contact with the CSU or an appropriate Officer as soon as possible and should make an attempt to put the person in contact with an ADVANCE advocate. No person complaining of domestic violence (or related harassment which is often what is presented) should be turned away without significant effort to put them in contact someone on the day.

**3. Front line officers should offer immediate referral to ADVANCE.**

While this is an aim of Standing Together this was rarely the case in practice. Often the ADVANCE advocates received a referral once the case was passed to the CSU. This can be after several experiences with the Police. ADVANCE need to be involved as soon as possible.

**4. Front line officers should be trained to advise both the perpetrator and the victim that it is possible that the case against the perpetrator can go forward regardless of involvement from the victim.**

This does not happen frequently but this would send a clear message to the perpetrator and the victim that the Police and CJS take this crime seriously.

**5. Cases where both parties are charged with a crime should be reviewed so that victims are given appropriate support and the history of abuse and prior police contact is taken into consideration.**

Several survivors spoke of times when they were arrested by the Police despite numerous callouts to their address when they were the victim of domestic violence. Some mechanism should have been in place so that their situation was taken into consideration.

**6. Feedback given in the consultation is shared with the Police in ongoing training.**

**7. MARAC or similarly structured risk assessment meetings should be implemented as soon as possible.**

## **Appendix 1**

Risk assessment meetings such as Operations/MARAC are important so that when there is serious concern for the safety of a victim (as there would have been in several of the cases involved in the consultation), a swift, multi agency and action-focused meeting would have taken place to align all possible sources of support and help as efficiently as possible.



## QUALITY ASSURANCE EXERCISE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CAUTIONS ADMINISTERED 2006

An exercise to examine the decisions to administer cautions in domestic violence cases was conducted on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2007. A small group was convened to undertake this exercise, which consisted of:

DI Annesley – Hammersmith and Fulham CSU

Sally SteadmanSouth – Manager, ADVANCE (the domestic violence advocacy project)

Victoria Hill – Project Coordinator, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence.

The sample of domestic violence cautions was from 2006 and 23 cases were examined (including one case of counter/cross allegation). The cautions were randomly selected (1 in 5 from the list of cautions). The sample included cases involving both family and intimate partner violence.

### The findings of the dip sample exercise in summary were:

1. The review showed that the decision to caution was correct in 20 cases. For the remaining three cases:

Case 1. It was agreed that this was a borderline decision to caution, however due to the nature of the offence and risk factors present a charge could have been justified. The involved strangulation, injuries (scratches to face and neck, swollen throat) and that the victim had given birth 6 months previously. The group agreed that a defensible decision was documented and justified as it was the first allegation, full admissions were made in interview, the victim's wishes were taken into account, the relationship had ended and that the child was not present at the time.

Case 2. It was agreed that a charge would have been more appropriate.

Case 3. This caution was administered by the Response Team (not CSU as were the others) and the CRIS did not contain enough detailed information for the group to review the decision made.

2. All of the cases included a risk assessment.

3. MERLINS were included in most of the cases where children were present/of the household.

4. Rationales for cautioning were clearly noted.

5. Victim's wishes had been obtained and considered in all cases.

6. Notable difference between the quality of information, reporting and background checks between responding officers and CSU.

### Conclusion and learning points:

1. It was agreed that decisions to caution were defensible and clearly noted in all but two cases.

2. When a caution is to be administered for a DV offence a referral to ADVANCE must be made.

3. Cautions are not being administered to repeat DV offenders.

4. Listening to and considering the victim's wishes is important to keep them engaged with the system and encourage them to report repeat incidents.

### **Appendix 3**

5. This is a very important exercise that is conducted on a regular basis. A further review has been agreed to take place in October 2007 and at 6 monthly intervals thereafter.

**Minimum Standards of Investigation- Crimes of Honour-based Violence and Forced Marriage**

Although the reporting of such crimes of this Borough remains relatively low, officers need to be aware of the requirements upon them once such an allegation is received. Set out below are the minimum requirements expected of them.

Responsibility for the investigation of such crimes will belong to the Community Safety Unit, unless within that allegation there is also an allegation of rape, in which case it will fall to officers of the Borough Sapphire Unit to ensure compliance with Standard Operating Procedures for the investigation of rape.

**Allegation Received- Initial Action**

- See the individual immediately in a secure and private place and alone, even if attending with others or reporting within the home environment.
- All allegations are to be taken seriously, including those from male victims or third parties.
- Reassure the individual of police confidentiality.
- Notify the Duty Officer- for initial supervision.
- Notify as soon as possible the Borough CSU Supervisor (either DI or DS).
- **Do not allow the individual to go home without first consulting CSU/Sapphire staff or out of hours N/D CID AND SEEK ADVICE IN ALL CASES.**
- Out of hours the Borough on-call DI is to be informed.
- Establish a way of making contact discreetly in the future, including a password for use by investigating officers.
- Establish full details of the individual under threat to include

Date of report

Name of individual under threat

Nationality

Age

Date and place of birth

Passport details

School details

Employment details

Full details of allegation

Name and address of parents or those with parental responsibility

National Insurance number

Driving Licence number

Details of any injuries and arrange medical examination

Secure all relevant evidence to support the allegation

**CREATE A CRIS REPORT AND CRIMINT ENTRY WHICH ARE TO BE RESTRICTED**

**DO NOT**

- Send the individual away in the belief it is not a police matter.
- Approach members of the family or community leaders without the express permission of the individual
- Share information with anyone without the express permission of the individual.
- Breach confidentiality.

**YOU COULD BE PUTTING THE INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE IN DANGER**

## Consulting survivors of domestic violence in LBHF

It is an important part of the partnership work on domestic violence in LBHF that we listen to the experience of victims of domestic violence and seek to improve their access to and their experience of criminal justice services.

When the Standing Together response was developed in 1998 the then new concept of pro active police response backed by referral to specialist advocates was tested out with groups of local survivors.

Since then Standing Together has developed safe and respectful ways of consulting survivors and ensuring that what they say is fed back to the relevant partner agency and that, where possible, their recommendations are followed up and where that is not possible, explaining to those survivors, why it is not possible. Our experience is that survivors welcome an opportunity to share experience that they hope will help others in the future. They note what has been helpful and what would have been more helpful. Their recommendations are to the point and tend to reflect how little it would take to make a difference to overcoming their barriers to using the service of the local police. It is however a small minority of victims contacted who agree to participate, face to face, and even fewer who manage to get there on the day. This is not easy to share experiences with strangers and the courage and efforts of those who do is greatly appreciated..

In 2001 the first formal consultation was held, on local victims' experience of calling the police to domestic violence incidents, published in the report 'Survivors Speak'. The Met Police in Hammersmith & Fulham opened up domestic violence training for the whole division in 2000-1, for three consecutive years, and the observations and recommendations from these reports were fed directly into the training. The response of officers was then fed back to future focus groups of survivors.

It was recognised that some of this experience was becoming historic, as policing domestic violence changed, so in 2005 a focus group was convened of victims of domestic violence who had called the police in LBHF in the last year as part of a coordinated response. This was published as 'Speaking Up' in March 2005. This report is more user friendly for the agencies mentioned in it. Recommendations and key points are the focus of the report. The publication was well timed as Met Police Hammersmith & Fulham were reviewing the management of domestic violence on the division and used the report to support this work. A copy of 'Speaking Up' was given to the Inspector leading each response team.

Standing Together used the key points in training police officers new to Hammersmith and Fulham, Street Duties Officers and Safer Neighbourhood Team PCSO's. They have taken up relevant points with ADVANCE, the advocacy project in LBHF, and brought the findings to the specialist domestic violence court review in June 2006.

This year, 2007, Standing Together is putting together a consultation with local lesbian, bisexual gay and Transgender survivors of domestic abuse about what the barriers are to their using the criminal justice system, their experience of it and of the availability of support and information. The CSU act as the LGBT liaison for the Borough and will be helping to put survivors they are aware of in touch with the consultation. This consultation will be carried out in partnership with pan London specialist support groups and local witness/victim support groups. The report will be launched at an LGBT conference run by Victim Support in July 2007 and both will address the access to services for LGBT people

Other methods used have been:

**Telephone survey of ADVANCE clients**, which is long, detailed, valuable to ADVANCE and an excellent illustration of the quality of their work.

### **Feedback forms given to victim/witnesses attending Court.**

ADVANCE and other witness support agencies are encouraged to 'capture' any feedback, including angry or negative reactions, from victim/witnesses as they leave court and to record them in the Witness Feedback book set up for this purpose in the Witness Service Room at West London Magistrates Court.

## **Appendix 5**

In the past few postal feed back forms were returned, as these are stressed witnesses in crisis, at court for trials. In 2006-7 the feedback forms were redesigned. Standing Together now offer follow up by telephone and have secured the services of a specialist to do this. The feedback pack is distributed by all the witness support agencies at the specialist court to individual witnesses as they leave the domestic violence court. This has increased the number of responses.

All responses are fed into the Specialist Domestic Violence Court annual reviews and to the reports of those reviews. Specific issues are taken to the SDVC Management Group.

Beryl Foster  
April 2007



### STANDING TOGETHER AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PARTNERSHIP TRAINING POLICE TRAINING

#### Between April 2006 – and March 2007 Standing Together has:

- ❖ Delivered partnership training to all the Street Duties (i.e. newly qualified) police officers and to officers new to the borough on how to handle Domestic Violence incident, and the partnership context for their work. **24 trained in total.** Training is delivered with partner agencies: Police CSU investigating officers, ADVANCE advocates, CPS prosecutor and Standing Together Training Officer.
- ❖ Delivered 5 one day training course to all the Hammersmith & Fulham Police Safer Neighbourhoods Teams on their role in handling Domestic Violence incidents, and the contribution that Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) can make to early intervention with and recognition of domestic violence in the community they serve. This is as far as we know the only training programme in the country specifically designed for PCSOs. See *attached* information about the content of the training and feedback from participants. **51 trained in total.**

#### Other Standing Together training in 2006-7 relevant to the coordinated response to domestic violence incidents in LBHF.

- ❖ Maintained and facilitated domestic violence training for health professionals at Charing Cross A&E Dept, Charing Cross Walk in Centre and Parsons Green Walk In Centre. We have also briefed and trained the Practice development Nurse to enable him to co-facilitate the protocol training sessions. **7 nurses trained on DV awareness. Delivered domestic violence.** Co facilitated 4 **health & domestic violence protocol** training sessions for A&E nurses at Charing Cross Hospital – total of **24 staff members trained.**
- ❖ Coordinated and delivered a training day on Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Risk Management for key Standing Together partners to assist in the development of a MARAC. Agencies attending included: Police, Probation, ADVANCE, Housing Options, Children's Services, Health, Standing Together

#### Evaluation of training: Methods used

1. Clear learning and training objectives are developed for each course, in consultation with managers and front line staff needs, and these are either sent out before the course or handed out on the day.
2. On each course, every participant is asked to complete, before leaving, an evaluation form. These vary and are designed with the specific needs of the agency in question, as well as asking some standard questions, such as how well were the course objectives met, and what they plan to change in their practice as a result of the training.
3. The feedback/evaluation forms are summarised, together with all narrative and written or verbal comments about the training and/or their learning made by participants. The summaries are sent to the manager who commissioned the training, and filed at Standing Together.
4. Numbers and posts of participants are also recorded.
5. For the police training, an annual report on numbers, comments and feedback is taken to the Superintendents meeting, and the Police Training Officer records who attends, and how this relates to police training targets.

### Training as an integrated part of the partnership work

Other key aspects of the evaluation of the impact training of training with and for partner agencies, and the way in which we use training to inform and be informed by practice are:

- Before and after data snapshots that are possible with police data from time to time
- Mapping training dates onto graphs showing e.g. progress at the health sites in implementing the protocol
- Feedback from advocates and others working with survivors about the experiences they have of practice by front line workers
- Short papers or verbal reports prepared for managers on issues raised in the training courses for their staff, e.g. about further information or training or support needs staff have in relation to their practice
- Consultation with survivors about the quality of the service they receive from agencies we have trained
- Feedback by questionnaire or comments book of the experience of witnesses at the Specialist Domestic Violence Court at West London Magistrates Court.

Attached:

Evaluation summary, training objectives and training timetable for the Safer Neighbourhoods Team training for Police Community Support Officers.

**Domestic Violence Training for Safer Neighbourhoods Teams H&F Police  
Delivered by Standing Together against Domestic Violence  
2006-2007**

**Collated Summary of Feedback  
June 2006 – March 2007**

**Four courses were run, of between half a day and three quarters of a day in length  
50 PCSO's attended + 1 sergeant - 51 forms returned**

**1. Can you rate the quality of the training in relation to the following:**

*Circle one, where 1 is agree strongly and 5 is disagree strongly. 'dv' = domestic violence*

Disagree	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
	strongly strongly				
	1	2	3	4	5
a). I feel better equipped to respond to incidents of dv and assist victims	26	22	3	0	0
b). I have a better understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence	28	22	1	0	0
c). I have some useful information & written materials to help me in my job	22	26	3	0	0
d). The training objectives were met	23	27	1	0	0

**Any comments?**

*The training was well delivered*

*The course was well tailored to our needs*

*Some of this was useful, other things were common sense*

*Very interesting. Certainly have a more informed view and understanding. Definitely more time needed.*

*Very interesting and valuable*

*I learnt a great deal about dv and it was good to hear first hand accounts from the trainers*

*The training gave me a better understanding on dv & how to deal with certain situations*

*Objective number 5 not completed*

*Very informative. Maybe a day can be set up for PCSO's to sit in on a hearing in a court room?*

*Very informative and opened my mind*

*I learned some good stuff*

*There is far more to dv than I thought. Not as limited in definition*

*Very good training*

*The best training day I have had as a PCSO – professionally prepared and presented*

*Very fruitful time*

*The time span short, it should be a whole day*

*Nothing to comment about, everything was very interesting*

*The training is interesting but needs to go deeper*

*Sadly too rushed for such an important issue and felt (somewhat) that there was only one perception of reasons for dv.*

Very good course

**. What did you find most useful or interesting?**

*The fact that dv is serious and we have to pay more attention to it*  
*The advice given about ADVANCE (x2 )*  
*Actively participating in group discussions (x 4)*  
*The Power and Control cycle ( x 2)*  
*Knowing that there's one relevant authority dealing with this*  
*My understanding that other agencies like ADVANCE play a greater role in the struggle against dv (x2)*  
*It was honestly all interesting (x 7)*  
*To investigate the WHY STAY question*  
*Statistics (facts and figures) (x 6)*  
*The whole idea of domestic violence*  
*The course was informative and well presented*  
*I now have a better understanding of dv and how it can make a chain of events happen*  
*I came here today with very little knowledge of dv and I leave with all my questions answered*  
*What practical methods we can use on duty*  
*I knew little about the figures (statistics) on this subject and it opened my eyes*  
*Practical ways for PCSO's to help as our role can be limited (x 4)*  
*Hearing everyone else's view*  
*Looking at the mindset of the survivor e.g. why do they find it hard to leave, this was useful (x 2)*  
*The fact that the victims make excuses for offending partners and stay loyal to them*  
*The knowledge that we can gain information from and refer to ADVANCE*  
*Going through the definition of dv which ranged from non-physical ie...emotional before becoming violent (physical)*  
*The video - types of behaviour x 2*  
*Discussion about why people stay in an abusive relationship*  
*Domestic abuse intervention module*  
*Know that there is a support out there for victims*  
*How to help victims who are in dv*  
*Domestic violence is universal and it is good that people are now taking notice*  
*Figures and complications of the Criminal Justice System*  
*Case study, understanding how to deal with a situation and which lines to go down*  
*The key risk factors for DV*  
*The model for treating perpetrators*

**3. Could you suggest any ways of improving the course or doing it differently next time?**

**e.g. content, methods, length of the session**

*Increase session length (11 said this) - (a lot to take in)*  
*I think we could spend more time on some issues*  
*Incorporate more group based activities (group interaction / discussions) (x 5)*  
*Group interaction helps the information stay in your head for longer*  
*Perhaps role plays, to get more participation (more practical work) (x )2*  
*A pity we were unable to view the Video section*  
*Shorten it*  
*The chance to ask more questions*  
*I thought everything was good (x 3)*  
*Learning about victims and perpetrators and how we can help victims*

## Appendix 6

*Some more visual material i.e. photographs of bruises / wounds and more video footage*  
*Maybe a bit more info about the legal side of offences etc*  
*Handouts could have been better and overheads to reinforce learning were not available*  
*More psychological make up case studies- actual analysis of real examples, actual victims x 2*  
*Longer discussions*  
*Maybe once a year*  
*Standing up while in a session would have been better. No chair policy(?)*  
*I believe one should be given some materials to read before the talk or lecture*  
*More breaks, visual aid*  
*Video/audio transcript – from a survivor, would make it more effective – real life experience*  
*More comfort break, have victims of dv come in and talk to the group*  
*Keep it more active in the session by films about dv*  
*Longer period allocated and ensure officers do not work late night shift evening before*

### 4. Do you have any suggestions for improving the services offered by the police to domestic violence victims in this Borough?

*More training for all officers (all PCSO's should do this course)*  
*Appointing a representative of each SNT to go on a similar course and to train in the 'spokesperson' for dv in the team*  
*Keep the victims more informed*  
*More sympathy in terms of attitude*  
*Regular training and updates on best practice to all officers*  
*Increase awareness and support and let victims know we take dv seriously*  
*No, seems satisfactory*  
*No, it appears very well covered by ADVANCE*  
*Distribution of leaflets frequently*  
*More frequent training*  
*More ways to help them and to help us to help them*  
*We should be more proactive*

### 5. Overall, how do you rate this course? Circle one

Excellent	Good	OK	Fairly good	Poor
24	24	2	0	1

### 6. Any further comments?

*Thank you very much for the training. I think it will help me do my job better*  
*Peta & Yumi were very good and I enjoyed the bit about putting forward grapes to freshen us up*  
*Good teaching on your side girls, I am honoured to be part of the course.*  
*Was very (?) pleased*  
*If package (written) can be made for us & we keep it and go over*  
*Get a better room and decent equipment*  
*Thank you*  
*Bigger classroom if you have a bigger class, up to date visual equipment that works*  
*Well presented.*  
*Gave good awareness of partnership available between Police and Advance / ST and how we can consult each other to improve public service*  
*Standard of tuition was of a very high standard*  
*I would have liked more on understanding the underlying dynamics of DV relationships and help available to survivors in terms of their future choices. Also more about recidivism.*

**Monitoring Figures:**

**Number of people trained:**

June 27 2006	10	PCSOs
July 21 2006	11	(incl. 1 Sgt + PO)
Sept 12 2006	16	PCSOs
Oct 11 2006	7	PCSO's
March 21 2007	7	PCSO's
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	

**Trainer: Peta Sissons, Standing Together against Domestic Violence, Training and Information Officer**

The training was delivered by Peta Sissons, with presentation and support from ADVANCE advocates, and Police Training Officers (on risk assessment). An SNT Inspector was present and introduced each course.

**STANDING TOGETHER AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
& HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM POLICE**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRAINING FOR SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS TEAMS  
2006-2007**

**OBJECTIVES**

*By the end of the lesson the students will be able to...*

1. Identify the range of abusive behaviours that constitute domestic violence in an intimate partner and family setting, for people from diverse communities.
2. List the key risk factors used by the Metropolitan Police and others in responding to domestic violence.
3. Explain why victims of domestic violence may be reluctant to report, and what might support them and their neighbours in safe and early reporting.
4. Describe a number of practical ways in which Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, and particularly PCSOs, could act in a proactive way to:
  - increase the safety of domestic violence survivors
  - record and share appropriate information to assist in the coordinated process of prosecution and bringing offenders to justice
  - make effective and safe referrals to agencies that can support victims and their children, and that work with domestic violence perpetrators.
5. Plan for how your SNT will respond to domestic violence over the next year.

**TRAINERS**

John Sutherland, Bill Heasman or an Inspector from SNT introduce & attend the p.m. session  
 Police trainer, Metropolitan Police, H&F  
 Peta Sissons, Training and Information Officer, Standing Together against Domestic Violence  
 An Advocate from ADVANCE

## TIMETABLE

- 9:00 Welcome**, introduction to course  
**The Dynamics of Domestic Violence**  
An Ordinary Crime?  
What do we know about domestic violence?  
Secrecy and safety  
What survivors say they need from the police  
Support needs of families and neighbours
- 10:45** Break (15 mins)
- 11:00 The Dynamics of Domestic Violence (continued)**  
**Information you may need**  
ADVANCE and what SNT can expect/offer  
Diverse needs of survivors  
Other referral agencies for victims and perpetrators  
Standing Together, the Specialist court and the partnership
- 12:00 Risk factors and risk assessment in domestic violence cases:** Metropolitan police procedure
- 12:30 Lunch (45 mins)**
- 1:15 Action planning and best practice for Safer Neighbourhood Teams**  
Reviewing a domestic violence murder  
Guiding principles  
Case study group work  
  
Action planning for your SNT and presentation to panel  
  
**Question & Answer**
- 3:00 Evaluation forms and Close**